

Measuring the Creativity of JSC Graduates: A Bangladeshi Perspective

Farah Shawkat

ID# 11363002



Mr. S. M. Mohibul Hasan

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Farah Shawkat

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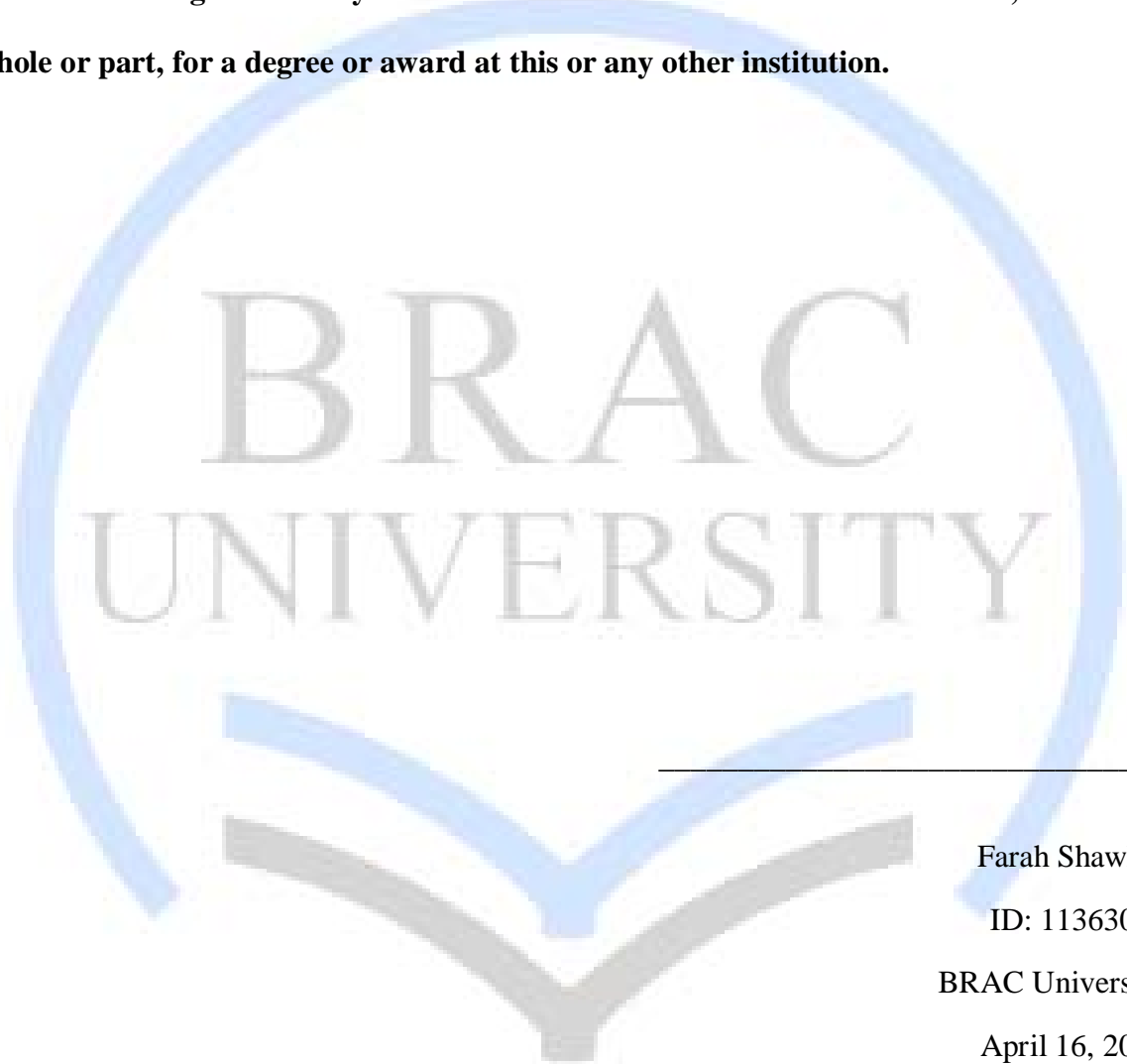
Department of English and Humanities

BRAC University

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DECLARATION

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, wherever contributions of other sources and information have been used, they have been acknowledged. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in a whole or part, for a degree or award at this or any other institution.



Farah Shawkat

ID: 11363002

BRAC University

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ABSTRACT

For a long time, Bangladeshi learners were accustomed to the so-called “rote-learning” system. However, in the primary and secondary education sectors, a creative curriculum has recently been introduced by the curriculum wing of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh. After the implementation of the grading system, learners are securing better grades more than any time else. Their good grades show that learners are not only knowledgeable but also creative. However, in reality, the situation is different. This paper studies learners’ achievements by comparing their proficiency level measured by their JSC results with the results received from a Test devised by the researcher. The researcher offered an English sample test and graded it according to the grading policy of NCTB. Research findings indicate that very few learners got good grades. In fact, most of them got poor grades compared to their JSC results. Analysis of their creative level verifies that the creative curriculum is less effective in our context. The essay makes an attempt at measuring the creativity of Junior School Certificate (JSC) exam graduates in Bangladesh.

Measuring the Creativity of JSC Graduates: A Bangladeshi Perspective

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Education and training are the keys to the future. A key can be turned in two directions. Turn it one way and you lock resources away; turn it other way and you realize resources and give people back to themselves.” – Sir Ken Robinson

Students perform better when they are able to share their own thoughts without relying on teachers and texts. Contrary to the old belief that learners are too young to share their own opinions, nowadays teaching and learning is not only limited to textbooks. It has changed its ways of imparting knowledge. Educators and scholars have stopped treating learners as sponge. Previously, teachers used to provide all the inputs to the learners to memorize and they were very good at absorbing them like a sponge and in the exam hall just forcefully excreted the outputs like a parrot. Now, here comes the vital enquiry whether proper learning is taking place or not. Most of the cases, this sort of learning does not leave any trace of knowledge in learner's mind. Learners may achieve good grades but eventually their level of intellectuality remains low. In that case, learners should get scope to create something on their own. According to Native American saying, Tell me and I will forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I will understand. Autonomous learners are those who learn by seeing the world, tend to be well-educated in the sense of proper education. Knowledge is essential but limited to texts, teachers etc. On the other hand, being imaginative or creative can lead a learner to explore the outside world. As I have mentioned before that the pattern of learning is transforming so that learners are being judged on the basis of their

creativity level. In Bangladesh, government is passing different laws and plans to ensure higher education. For Bangla medium schools, government has put forward a new creative curriculum to ensure creativity in education. According to National Education Policy 2010, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) made changes in the content of the syllabus as well as the question pattern to assess the learner's creativity. In my research work, I want to measure the creativity of particular level of learners to check whether government's education policy is effective to current situation of our country or not.

1.1 Background of the Research

The quality of education needs to be upgraded due to frequent change of educational policies. Nowadays learners are encouraged to create something novel and learn by their own. To do that, learners need to have familiar learning contents and goal so that they are eager to take risks to produce something. Even this helps them to think about different things. In Bangladesh, education policies have been planned and proposed, but is it properly implemented on the learners? Are the teachers capable enough to carry out the plans? Are the learners proficient enough to do something by themselves? As they are used to rely on teachers, it seems challenging not to work on their own. Even to assess learners, it is a big question whether they are assessed by following the marking criteria provided by the government or not. Every year lots of students are passing different public exams and most of them are securing good grades. Here the researcher comes with a big confusion whether learners' standard has been maintained or it has degraded or not. Parents, students and school authorities are happy for the overall performance of the learners. However, a big lie is clinging with the fact that according to several educators, learners are getting good grades, but their quality has fallen down. Before the grading system, education policy makers used to

follow division system, where learners are used to study to gain the highest marks.

Nowadays, in grading system, learners are aimed to secure a particular grade and the highest grade percentage is 80% to 100%. A learner who is getting 80% in one subject and another learner is getting 95% then both of them will be considered as same grade (A+) student. So, they do not need to worry about securing extra marks. They basically focus on gaining grades rather than knowledge. In that way, their quality of work has lost its uniqueness and novelty. Another hideous truth that has initiated the idea of measuring learners' creativity is while talking to teachers, the researcher has found that grading policy provided by the government is alarmingly ignored and excused. Most shocking part is it is the government who instructs school authorities to allot grades to learners without concerning their merits. Principally, they are worried about the number of students who are getting good grades. For them, number of students who are getting good grades is more important than maintaining quality of students. After observing this situation, researcher has decided to carry out a research work to measure learners' creativity level and to do that JSC (Junior School Certificate) graduate students who are currently studying in class IX in different Bangla medium schools are selected. A sample English test paper has been prepared and let them to sit the test. Finally, their written work has been measured by following the government's grading policy.

1.2 Significance

In my research paper I will mainly focus on the learners' response to sample English test paper. Those response papers are assessed by considering the rubric provided by the Bangladeshi government. This paper also contains a critical analysis of the current creative curriculum. The findings will be helpful for teachers and curriculum developers to set

appropriate curriculum and lesson plans by reflecting learners' actual level of creative learning.

1.3 Objective

The main objective is to measure the students' creativity. And as an instrument, I will have to compare learners' achievement (based on a test offered by me) with their proficiency levels attested by the JSC exams.

1.4 Research Question

My research work is guided by following research questions:

- Are the learners able to write meaningful essays?
- Do they prefer rote learning or creative learning?
- In Bangladeshi context, why it is difficult to promote creativity in learning situation?

CHAPTER 2: LITRATURE REVIEW

2.1 Creativity

It has become an acceptable fact that defining creativity is not as straightforward as it seems. Nevertheless many researchers those who work on the concept of creativity have tried to define it from their perspectives. As Naderi, Abdullah, Aizan, Sharir, & Kumar, (2009) and Otto (1998) stated "From a psychological point of view, creativity is an important factor

because it provides a framework for the description of an individual, and also specific differences between individuals. These individual differences are important because they can be used to predict future behaviour such as academic success” (Pishghadam, Khodadady and Zabihi, 2011, p. 465). Furthermore, creativity is not something that we can relate with education.

Sharp (2004) claimed that most theorists agree that the creative process involves a number of components, most commonly:

- imagination
- originality
- productivity
- problem solving
- the ability to produce an outcome of value and worth. (p. 5)

The learner who has possess any of this components, must demonstrate the ability to create something novel by his or her own. Also that person might be able to apply the knowledge to real-life situations.

Namely, Ellis Paul Torrance (1969), a famous psychologist and best known for his research in creativity saw creativity broadly as “the process of sensing a problem, searching for possible solutions, drawing hypotheses, testing and evaluating, and communicating the results to others. He added that the process includes original ideas, a different point of view, breaking out of the mould, recombining ideas or seeing new relationships among ideas” (as cited in Craft, p. 13). Generally, self-reliant people are tended to be more confident than those

who are dependent on others. They have the courage to go bold and achieve something by themselves.

2.2 Background of creativity

The concept of creativity and creative people are considered as superior from the beginning of time. According to Ryhammer & Brolin (1999)

The notion of 'inspiration' or 'getting an idea', is found in the Greek, Judaic, Christian and Muslim traditions and is founded on the belief that a higher power produces it. During the Romantic era in Europe, the source of inspiration and its artistic expression was seen as being the human being. During this era, originality, insight, the creative genius and the subjectivity of feeling were highly valued. From the end of the nineteenth century, people began to investigate the question of what fostered creativity. (as cited in Craft , 2001, p. 5)

Again Craft (2001) stated that there were four major traditions in which this took place:

- the psychoanalytic tradition (including Freud's discussion of creativity as the sublimation of drives and Winnicott's work on development which makes creativity central and intrinsic to human nature)
- the cognitive tradition (stemming from Galton's work and including Mednick's exploration of the associative process and Guilford's exploration of divergent production of ideas and products)
- the behaviourist tradition (including Skinner's discussion of chance mutation in the repertoire of behaviours)

- the humanistic tradition (including Rogers, May and Maslow whose discussions focused on the self-realising person acting in harmony with their inner needs and potentialities). (p. 5)

There is a possibility that theorists may be influenced by more than one of the above mentioned traditions.

2.3 Varieties of Creativity

No single mind thinks alike, so creative persons do not show the same level of creativity. Various researchers have worked on it and sorted out branches of creativity. Various branches of study emerged in the early years of the twentieth century. They can be summarised as follows:

- creativity as an aspect of intelligence
- creativity as a mainly unconscious process
- creativity as a problem-solving capacity
- creativity as an associative process. (Craft, 2001, p. 7)

Barron and Harrington (1981) considered two main categories of definition of a criterion of creativity used in large bodies of research:

1. creativity as socially recognized achievement in which there are novel products to which one can point as evidence, such as inventions, theories, buildings, published writings, paintings and sculptures and films; laws; institutions; medical and surgical treatments, and so on; and
2. creativity as an ability manifested by performance in critical trials, such as tests,

contests, etc, in which one individual can be compared with another on a precisely defined scale. (p. 5)

Particularly Boden (2004) stated that “Creativity is the ability to come up with new ideas that are surprising yet intelligible, and also valuable in some way and it involves different types of creative thinking”. She proposed three types of creative thinking through which new ideas can be produced:

- combinational thinking: this produces new ideas by associating old ideas in unfamiliar yet intelligible and valuable ways.
- exploratory thinking: this explores all possibilities inherent in a current conceptual space using existing rules.
- transformational thinking: this significantly alters one or more rules of the current conceptual space.

2.4 Creative Learning

Creativity is not subject specific. We can relate creativity with any spheres of our lives.

According to Jeffrey and Craft (2004), relatively few studies have considered the student’s role in the creative learning process but “...early findings have shown that students use their imagination and experience to develop their learning; they strategically collaborate over tasks; contribute to the classroom curriculum and pedagogy; and evaluate critically their own learning practices and teachers’ performance” (as cited in Spendlove and Wyse, 2005, p. 22).

Creative learning also defined by Spendlove and Wyse (2005) as follows:

Creative learning is simply any learning that develops our capacity to be creative. It equips young people with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's world, nurturing ways of thinking and working that encourage imagination, independence, tolerance of ambiguity and risk, openness, the raising of aspirations.

(p. 19)

Psychologist J. P. Guilford (1950) is best known for his Structure of intellect (SI) theory, he argued that “a creative act is an instance of learning, if so, we suggest that creative learning is a creative act. Therefore, creative learning is learning which leads to new or original thinking which is accepted by appropriate observers as being of value” (as cited in Spendlove and Wyse, 2005, p. 24).

Mellou (1996) suggested that young children's creativity can be fostered through three educational settings:

- the creative environment: learner need to be actively involved in their work so that they can improve their skills more imaginatively. Also in early stages of learner's life the physical environment of classrooms plays a vital role. It allows them to be more creative in a more fun-oriented way.
- creative programmes: beside a suitable environment, a well-planned programme can assist to enhance learner's overall creative skills.
- creative teachers and ways of teaching: Most of the times it is normal that learners need someone who is expert in the particular area. Those people do not make them dependent rather scaffold learner's thought to frame something new.

2.5 Barriers of Creative Learning

Many researchers worked on ways of fostering creative learning among learners.

Nevertheless, they also came across with several barriers that hinder the process of creative learning. For instance, Amabile's (2012) model suggests that "individual creativity may be affected by even very minor aspects of the immediate social environment". Aspects of social environment such as, excessive time pressure, sense of competition, over-supervision, unavailability of working materials etc. Craft (2005) suggested that three categories of barriers were prominent:

- **Statutory:** There are several acts are proposed and passed to ensure creativity in educational sectors. In that way, authority feel the pressure to continue creative learning anyhow, this may terminate the spirit of creativity.
- **Organisational:** In different institutions, there lies the concept of competition to implement something innovative to attract the patrons. Also, parents of learners have the mind set of classic way of teaching and learning. They assume something innovative is less effective and less competitive for their children.
- **Pedagogical:** Teachers are always encouraged to take risks. However, the thought of accountability sometimes disallow them to make a courageous move. They tries to play safe and thus go with the general teaching ways. (as cited in Spendlove and Wyse, 2005, pp. 27-28)

It has been mentioned by many scholars that though schools put emphasis on creativity, most of the time they act like a "creativity killer" by evaluating and encouraging reward for the learners. In that case, learners' minds concentrate more on reward than creating something innovative. (Al-Dhobaiban, n.d., p. 8).

2.6 Creativity vs. Intelligence

While investigating concept of 'creativity', scholars have come across with another key concept 'intelligence'. In short, intelligence is the ability to comprehend something complex on the other hand, creativity is the ability to create something new. According to Aki (2006)

Intelligence is hereditary. Intelligence comprising the functions of the central nerve system of an individual is an innate capacity which is passed down from generation to generation through heredity and is ultimately shaped by experience, learning and environmental factors. It refers to the exercise of various mental faculties in different situations and circumstances. (p. 66)

S. Sulaiman and T. Sulaiman (2010) stated "most early theories about the nature of intelligence include one or more of the following three components: (1) the capacity to learn, (2) the total knowledge a person has acquired and (3) the ability to adapt successfully to new situations and the environment in general" (p. 134). Moreover, Ivcevic, Brackett and Mayer (2007) considered creativity and intelligence as mental abilities and claimed that "Intelligence is associated with one's level of academic achievement and the prestige of one's occupation. Creativity, on the other hand, is associated with the degree to which a person engages in novel endeavours". Furthermore, Ivcevic, Brackett and Mayer (2007) evoked and pointed out a number of theories have been proposed about the relations between intelligence and creativity. These theories postulate

(a) that creativity is a subset of intelligence (Guilford, 1975); (b) that creativity and intelligence are related or partially overlapping constructs (Barron & Harrington, 1981); or (c) that creativity and intelligence are independent abilities (Wallach & Kogan, 1965). Empirically, across a number of studies, the correlation between

intelligence and creative ability has been rather low (Runco & Albert, 1986; Torrance, 1975; Wallach & Kogan, 1965), supporting the notion that these constructs are mostly distinct mental abilities. (pp. 199-200)

Sharp (2004) raised a significant question that whether creativity and intelligence are synonymous or not. However, Multiple intelligence theory suggests people may have different abilities but it does not specify that they are creative. She stated “Most authorities agree that creativity is different. Creativity has been shown to be distinct from intelligence (children scoring high on intelligence tests are not necessarily highly creative)” (p. 6).

2.7 Myths about Creativity

The concept of creativity is not something exceptional; it has also travelled in the realm of myth. As Sharp (2004) claimed

1. Creativity is assumed to be related with art/music as it is the ability to create something. However, creativity is not subject-specific; we can formulate anything in any domain of our work.
2. For any young learner, it seems a bit confusing to differentiate things. Most of the learners find it challenging to do multi-task by relating one area to another; that is why adults are there to show the path.
3. Creativity fades away if the notion of competition interrupts in it. However, learning is problematic and creativity is related to problem solving tasks. So learners need to take his or her work seriously and continue to create and solve things creatively.

4. Creativity is the mental ability that every learner has more or less. Nevertheless, a mentor cannot ignore the fact that inspiration can help many to build up any quality.
5. Creativity does not rely on art related work entirely. To develop creativity, learners need to do problem-solving activities.
6. Any kind of organized thought assists a learner to interpret something effectively. In case of creativity, one needs to have at least some sort of knowledge as well as skill. (pp. 9-10)

2.8 Some Models/Theories that Support Creativity

2.8.1 Constructivist theory

The word 'construct' comes from the Latin word 'constrvere', which means 'to organise' or 'to construct' and the main theme of this theory is to cultivate ideas. A normal constructivist learning session starts with a query or problem. Teacher provides learners the materials to work on and they are involved in activities. Teacher only interferes if any guidance is needed. Learners are allowed to work according to their wish and create something new and innovative. In the field of learning Jerome Bruner emphasizes more on the development of environment and language. He believes that children have their own unique way to deal with any kind of problem and learning environment should let them to do it. If they work under supervision, his or her mental development will be hampered. They have their knowledge in the back of their mind and know how to deal with it.

To define constructivist learning, Good and Brophy (1994) included

- Learners construct their own meaning. Every human being has his or her own belief and idea. It can be moulded under expert's observation but cannot be neglected. So, learners should be allowed to create their own.
- New learning builds on prior knowledge. Learners have some sort of knowledge in their mind before solving any problem. Their sense of judgement allows them to decide which information to use and which to discard.
- Learning is enhanced by social interaction. In a learning environment social interaction among them plays a vital role. Usually interaction is accomplished in group work and discussions. Nevertheless, their sharing information through spontaneous interaction creates an opportunity to resolve many problems cooperatively.
- Meaningful learning develops through "authentic" tasks. Use of authentic materials in learning environment makes learning more motivating and it ensures learners involvement more rapidly than anything else. However, activities or materials are chosen by considering the practical and real world. (National curriculum 2012; Cooperstein and Weidinger, 2004)

2.8.2 Six hats

It has been discussed previously that learners have some sort of belief and idea before starting a work. However, they need to think about the explanation of the things according to the demand of the situation. Bono (1995) proposed Six thinking hat system, which separate or differentiate our thought process and allow us to act according to the rising situation. We can also pay individual attention to particular problems at a time. The hats are:

- White hat: this covers factual information and work as observer. It directs us toward information by gathering information, focusing on available information and asking relevant questions.

- Red hat: this covers affective factors of our lives. It is the phase where we offer attention to our intuition more than any logical interpretation. Our internal feeling seems more reliable than others. It just directs us to hear our inner-self.
- Black hat: this covers our suspicious side of life. After thinking emotionally, we became aware of our real surroundings and start to think about the risks and disadvantages and negative point of views. It basically directs us to look for complications.
- Yellow hat: this covers our optimistic attitude towards our lives. We start to think about advantages and different values of particular situation. It directs us to upcoming opportunities.
- Green hat: this covers the creative energies in our mind. We became concerned about the positive ideas, suggestions, alternatives and variations. It directs us to new changes.
- Blue hat: this covers controlled thoughts regarding our decisions. We learn to organize, overview and decide to finalize something. It directs us to learn new things.

The concept of hats not only supports us to think wisely according to the situation but also provide us self-controlled ways to think about various things. (pp. 14-15)

2.8.3 MI theory

Every learner has some kind of ability located inside his or her mind. Nevertheless, it is just a matter of realisation whether it can be revealed through test or by scaffolding or by self-awareness. Gardner proposed a much broader view of the definition of intelligence than a number of other theorists with his theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI). MI shows us the fact that every learner varies in terms of intelligence or abilities so teachers need to follow

different strategies to unleash the best from him or her. S. Sulaiman and T. Sulaiman (2010) summarised the different intelligence categorised by Gardner:

- Linguistic Intelligence: ability to use language effectively and creatively to communicate ideas both in writing and speaking
- Musical Intelligence: ability to recognize and use the nonverbal sounds: pitch, rhythms, and total patterns
- Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: ability to use numbers effectively and reasons well
- Spatial Intelligence: ability to manipulate and perceive objects or forms mentally and then to transfer those perceptions either mentally or concretely
- Bodily-kinaesthetic Intelligence: ability to coordinate physical movement
- Intrapersonal Intelligence: ability to process information about how a person feels and thinks
- Interpersonal Intelligence: ability to process information about how other people are feeling and thinking
- Naturalist Intelligence: ability to recognize and classify both the animal and plant kingdom (p. 139)

However, S. Sulaiman and T. Sulaiman (2010) claimed that “School curriculums have traditionally focused on the logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences. Therefore, schools teach more effectively for the learners who have strong language and logical thinking skills” (p. 135)

2.9 Education Policy of Bangladesh

In formal education, curriculum is a systematized outline of a detailed plan for implementing educational programmes. Curriculum also known as the blue print as it provides directions to others that how learning will be imparted. National Curriculum & Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh is responsible for planning a suitable curriculum for Bangla medium learners. A curriculum is a full package of guideline which comprises aims and objectives of education, learning outcomes, content and activities covered in classroom, assessing criteria for learners etc. If we examine the curriculum approved by the Bangladeshi Ministry of Education, the principles of developing curriculum are:

- creating opportunities for nurturing patriotic feelings on the basis of the Language Movement, Liberation War, and secular values
- emphasising morality and human values
- increasing opportunities for inquisitiveness, creativity and innovation
- grooming learners as science minded and work oriented
- acquiring skills to use modern technology
- underlining scopes for realistic and applied education besides theoretical knowledge
- enhancing opportunities for life skills
- highlighting human rights with a view to removing all kinds of discriminations
- developing human resources as per the demand of the globalized world emphasize

By considering the features of curriculum and syllabus plan, aims and objectives for education, we can figure it out that the government is trying to introduce such a plan that

creates comfortable learning environment to foster creativity among learners. It also assures to facilitate learners' holistic development as human beings rather mechanical creatures. Nevertheless, the model that is followed in developing the national Curriculum 2012 is Objective-Learning Outcome model or in another word, Product-oriented Model. According to this model, after determining aims and objectives for education, the learning outcomes are determined. So in that case, the class content, activities, techniques and other criteria have been set on the basis of outcomes. This model basically allows learners to follow adult's instruction of 'how it should be done' rather than allow learners to create anything that comes into their minds. So, here arises a big doubt, whether this curriculum promotes or hinders creativity.

For my research work, my target group is Junior School Certificate (JSC) graduates. On the accomplishment of Class VIII, a public examination will take place which is known as Junior School Certificate Examination. According to National Education Policy 2010, from FY 2011-2012 primary education covers students who study from class I- VIII. After pre-primary education, primary level is the utmost and essential phase of education. In this phase, learners start to gain the knowledge to be a skilled citizen of the country (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2012; National Education policy, 2010).

2.10 Measuring Creativity

Creativity in learning environment broaden one's knowledge, still we attempt to restrict it by considering measurement criteria. Nonetheless, there are many theorist and scholars who took the attempt and designed various tests to measure creativity level. According to Munro

Creativity tests basically measure learner's cognitive processes (divergent thinking, problem solving skill, working with novel ideas) and affective aspects (out of the box thinking, self-reliance, motivation). On the other hand, these tests do not consider technical skill for particular knowledge of learners. It is also emphasised by different testers that to measure particular creativity one type of test is not sufficient, several tests should be applied. (pp. 1, 6)

Torrance (1966, 1974), Besemer and Treffinger (1981), Besemer and O'Quin, (1987) and Taylor (1975) described criteria by which individual creativity could be assessed:

- fluency: the ability to create ideas effortlessly and effectively
- flexibility: the ability to be versatile in produce a large variety of ideas
- elaboration: the ability to develop an idea and achieve the outcome to resolve a situation
- novelty: the ability to produce unusual and original ideas to open up new perspectives for generating new creativity
- synthesis: the ability to combine elements in an elegant way so that the integration operate as a whole (Craft, 2001, p. 23; Munro, p. 3)

Moreover, Kaufmann (2003) pointed out, "On the practical educational level, we see this in the proliferation of all sorts of 'tests of creativity' with either no or very loose theoretical-conceptual foundations" (p. 248)

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Participants

For the research work, I selected Junior School Certificate (JSC) graduate students from Bangla medium schools to collect the required data. For this reason I went to several schools and finally succeeded to gather data from five schools. Those schools are:

- Adamjee Cantonment Public School
- SOS Hermann Gmeiner College
- Mirpur Girls' Ideal Laboratory Institute
- Dhanmondi Government Boys' High School
- Tejgaon Government Girls' High School

I informed the school authorities about my research work and requested them to allow me to gather data from students who are newly admitted to class IX (recently passed JSC exam, 2013). Most of the cases, school authorities, teachers and students were so cooperative.

In Bangla medium schools, they have minimum forty students and maximum seventy students per section. Most of the cases, I got the chance to collect data from average forty to fifty students, as I selected those students who got minimum A- (minus) in English in their JSC exam. I got forty students from Adamjee Cantonment Public School, fifty-one students from SOS Hermann Gmeiner College, fifteen students from Mirpur Girls' Ideal Laboratory Institute, forty-seven students from Dhanmondi Government Boys' High School and thirty-five students from Tejgaon Government Girls' High School. In total I confirmed one hundred and eighty-eight students' data for my thesis work.

3.2 Instruments

To collect my data, I used a sample test paper for students [attached in Appendix A]. The test paper is designed according to the National curriculum for class VIII students. In National Curriculum 2012

The creative questions will have two types: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) and creative questions. There will be three types of MCQ: simple MCQ, multiple completions, and situation set. Different MCQ should be arranged proportionately so that they can touch all four spheres of thinking skills (such as cognition 40%, comprehension 30%, application 20%, and higher skills 10%). All chapters in a subject should be included in assessment. There should be guideline for question setters before they set questions. Each MCQ will have one mark and it will have one stem followed by four alternatives. These four alternatives will belong to the four spheres of thinking skills to test learners' different skills (cognitive, comprehension, application, and higher skills). (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2012, p.29)

However, I have to shorten my test paper as this is for my thesis work so I set the time for forty minutes. I basically divided the question types into two segments: Reading part (that comprises an unseen passage and related questions) and Writing part (that comprises two types of writing based questions). My main purpose is to measure student's creativity so more mark is allocated for writing section. For assessment part, I followed the grading policy provided by NCTB. I talked to teachers and collected the criterion from them.

3.3 Procedure

As I have mentioned previously that I used government's grading policy to assess student's writing, after checking I converted the marks in the scale of 100 and graded according to national grading scale. After that I accumulated the data using Microsoft excel. Mixed method was used for analysing the data that combines both qualitative and quantitative research.

3.4 Limitations

After conducting my data collection process, I have realised that there are some limitations of this research paper, such as

- As I considered Bangla medium curriculum, I should collect data not only from Dhaka based schools but also from schools situated in other parts of the country. Moreover, the research was limited to very few institutions due to time constraints. Even it was almost impossible to get in and reach the students of some schools because of the strict security system.
- My test paper is basically the short version of JSC English first paper. I could not take extensive test as school authority would not permit me such time to conduct my research work. They have their own scheduled routine for regular classes.
- I collected my data in February, 2014. Most of the schools just opened after winter vacation and they were occupied with several extra-curricular activities. Such as, annual picnic, annual sports etc. So, sometimes I had to wait for many days to collect my data and it also happened that I found less students present in class.

- My data collection process was delayed due to recent political unrest in our country which caused me to request my supervisor to allow me extra time to finish my thesis work. I also had to manage study leave from my office.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to conduct this research work. This chapter consists of data obtained from students and consequent analysis. In my research work, data is collected from pre-intermediate level learners of Bangla medium schools. My focus learners are the JSC (Junior School Certificate) graduates who obtained at least A- (60% - 69%) in English. To collect data, I offer my sample English test to students who have recently enrolled in class IX, after passing JSC examination. In total one hundred and eighty-eight students from five different schools sat the test.

As I mentioned previously, all the answer sheets have been graded by following guidelines provided by Bangladeshi government to markers of Junior School Certificate examination. Our government has set some particular set of grades, grade points and numerical values for creative curriculum. The breakdown is given below (A detailed guideline is attached in the appendix B):

Numerical Value	Grade	Grade Point
80% – 100%	A+	5.0
70% – 79%	A	4.0
60% – 69%	A-	3.5

50% – 59%	B	3.0
40% – 49%	C	2.0
33% – 39%	D	1.0
0% – 32%	F	0.0

After scrutinizing all the scripts following NCTB's grading policy, the researcher has come up with the following bar graph showing their results:

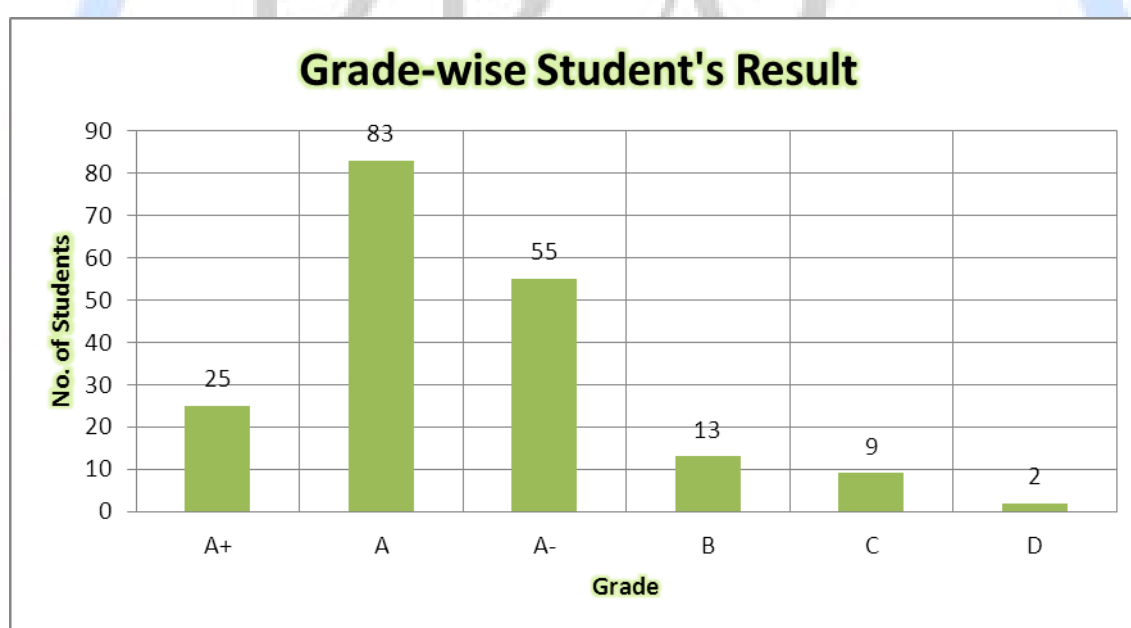


Figure 1: Student's result

According to the bar graph, among 188 students only 25 students got A+ (80% - 100%), 83 students got A (70% - 79%), 55 students got A- (60% - 69%), 13 students got B (50% - 59%), 9 students got C (40% - 49%) and 2 students got D (33% - 39%). The result shows that very few students got A+ in the sample test, though a lot of students got A.

My sample English test paper is basically the short version of English 1st paper of JSC examination. The paper is mainly segmented into two parts: Reading and Writing. As my research is to measure students' true creativity, I allotted more marks on the writing section. The reading section consists of 15 marks and writing section consists of 20 marks. Next pie chart shows the percentage of marks students gained in each section:

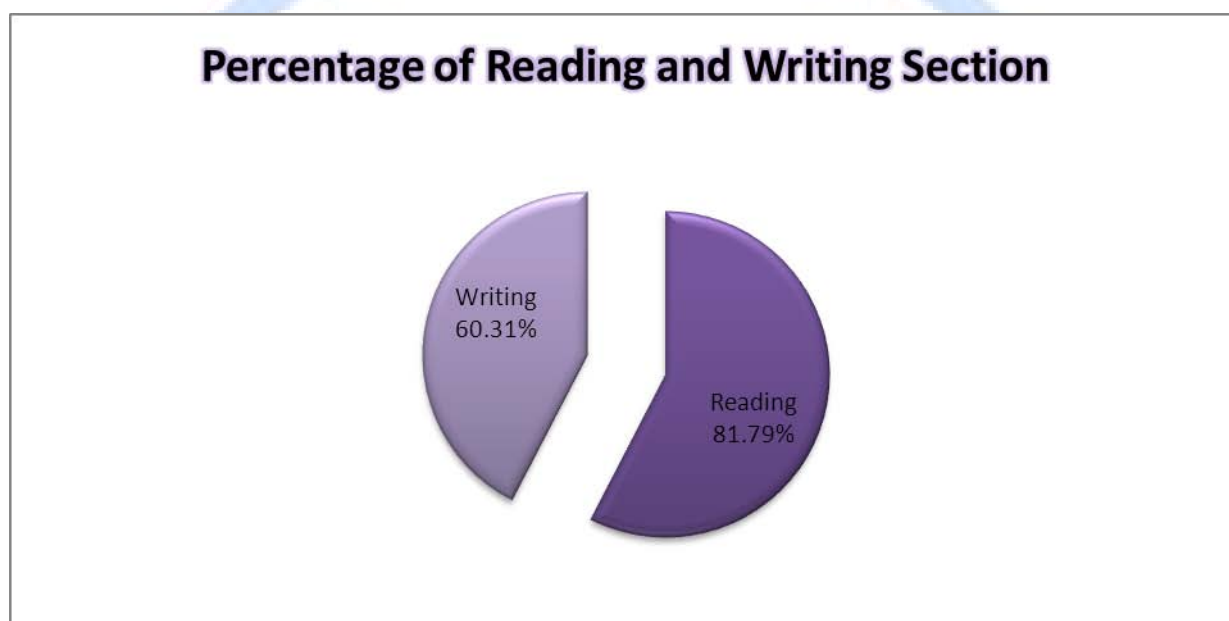


Figure 2: Percentage of marks students gained in reading and writing sections

We can see that on an average, students scored almost 82% marks in the reading section, which means they got A+ in reading section. On the other hand, they scored 60% marks in writing section that indicates they got A- in writing section.

While checking writing section, I needed to focus on student's creativity as well as the marking criterion set by the government. I have found there are basically three types of students, after checking their answer sheets. Firstly, productive learners, they wrote in own

words and used creative vocabulary to write the answers. Secondly, unproductive learners, some of them may write in own words but could not use creative vocabulary. Thirdly, re-productive learners, those people not only took the idea from the passage but also copied exact lines from the passage. They basically wrote few things by their known, sometimes lacked understanding to comprehend the theme even.

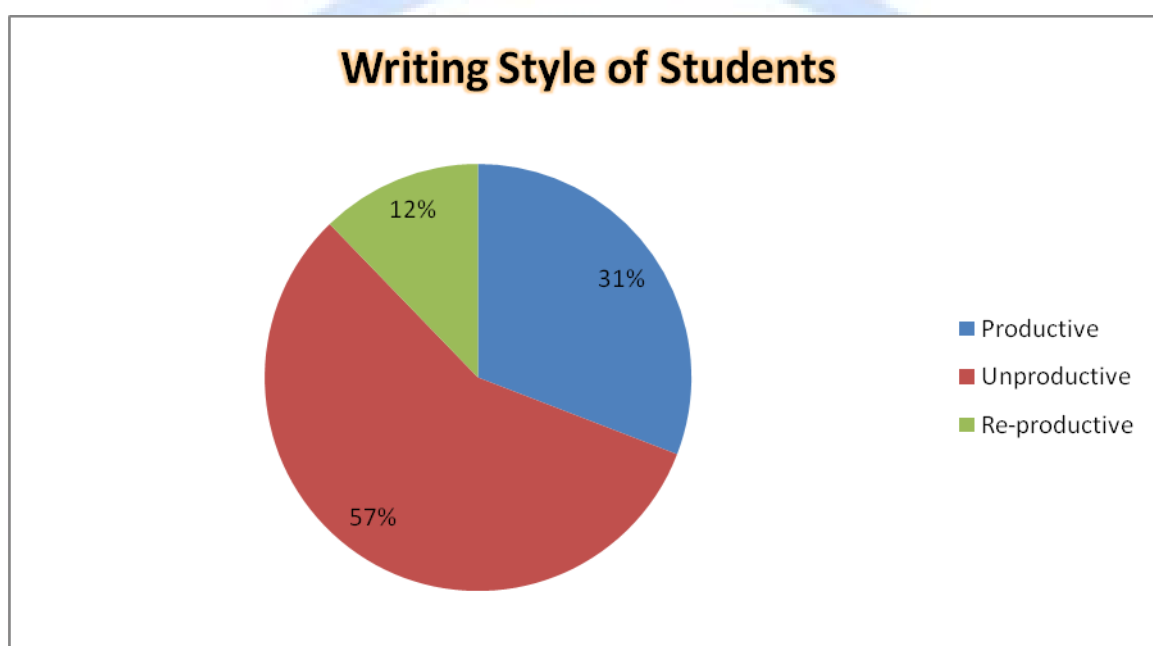


Figure 3: Different writing style of students

Here, the pie chart shows that 57% of students remained unproductive, 31% remained productive and 12% were re-productive. A majority of the students could not show their creativity.

A detailed and through data analysis and findings are included in appendix C.

Are the learners able to write meaningful essays?

After analysing the data, I found that students basically lack the ability to create something novel. From Figure 3, it can be found out that more than half of the students remain unproductive. My focus group students are supposed to be creative as they are the top class students among other students in school. None of them got less than A- in English in their JSC exam. However, in the sample test, they did not fare very well. Some of them even preferred taking direct help from the passage of reading section. A very few of them could stand out among all of them.

Do they prefer rote learning or creative learning?

By analysing Figure 2, it can be seen that on an average students have done well in reading part. There was a passage and learners had to read it and after comprehending it they had to answer some comprehension check questions. In that case, there is no need to be creative, but in writing section students need to show the creativity where they could not achieve the desired level that they have done in reading section. Even, their writing pattern [samples are attached in appendix] shows that most of them just repeated previously learned phrases or lines to express their feelings or to describe things.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In Bangladeshi context, why it is difficult to promote creativity in learning situation?

In Bangladeshi context, students' minds are conditioned in such a way that they become accustomed with the system and they just cannot think outside the box. Though the government has initiated the creative curriculum to promote creativity but the present scenario does not show the proper implementation. My research work is basically Dhaka-based where students get the proper facilities, if we consider the village areas then more shocking result may come. Unless students get the opportunity to flourish freely from early childhood, they will not be able to show creativity.

Government's Grading Policy

As I have mentioned earlier, I chose the best students from the huge number of students. Their JSC result showed that they got minimum A- (60% - 69%) in English first paper. However, my analysis showed another scenario, very few students got A+ and some of them also got less than A- in the sample English test. I followed the marking criteria provided by the government. Then it is not possible that the results show such variations. While collecting data, I made inquiry by talking to the teachers; most of them agreed that they basically cannot follow the criteria thoroughly. Most of the time, they get instructions from the higher authority to be lenient in grading students' copies. They also commented that if they do not grade students generously then the passing rate will be low. So it is better to grade them generally. Though the system is developed for the betterment of learners, a big doubt arises regarding their future. If the answer is on the basis of their merit, it is pathetic for a nation to

know that government of Bangladesh, in general, not at all concerned about it. Teachers gets the grading criteria from the government but its ineffectiveness is now an open secret. They are basically instructed to give good grades to the students without being concerned about their actual level of intelligence. If someone follows results of different public examinations, it can be understood that generally our education system is geared up by students' high passing rates. Even after passing all these exams, it has been observed that due to such deficiencies, students are struggling in higher education and as well as job fields.

All the students in one class cannot possess same level of knowledge or ability but in one school I found that the school authority claimed that all the students got A+ in English in JSC exam. However, in case of my test I found variations.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

While conducting the survey, researcher talked to various school teachers. Most of the cases they have the doubt that the proficiency level that has been measured by the school authorities does not confirm that group of learners are having same level of creativity.

Though in their exams they are securing good grades that certify that they are high achievers and creative students, actual scenario is different. To improve their creativity level, proper and feasible education policy needs to be taken from the early foundation stages which will encourage learners to be creatively active and share his or her opinions rather than relying on theoretical studies. Learners should get involved in more writing tasks so that they develop it as their hobby. The teaching technique should be fun-oriented so that learners get involved in topic without panicking to introduce with new things. While teaching learners, teachers have to consider the curriculum plan. They have to set the lesson plan and activities by keeping the

policy in mind as every plan has some time limit with some objectives. So, there should be a balance between both national curriculum plan and school's lesson plan. Curriculum plan should not be considered as a sacred book. Teachers should get the privilege to modify the plan according to the learners' needs. Teachers are the people who know the learners the most. So, a reliable and considerate level of communication should be maintained between curriculum setters and school authorities. As the government has proposed this creative curriculum in 2010, we can understand that it is still a fresh proposal for us. Our teachers who are teaching in different schools, most of them have teaching experience of several years. Nevertheless, they are new to this new curriculum plan. Nowadays many scholars of our country have raised a question of teacher's education and training. It is the teachers who will be the mentor of the learners to install the sense of creativity in them. Profoundly, they have a great impact on learner's learning process so it should be ensured that they are well educated and trained by keeping the need of present curriculum plan. Any person can teach but very few people know how to encourage learners to learn on their own. Alongside, supporting learners to create something new, they must learn to be independent. From the early years, they should let to grow interest to develop skills in technology to support their learning. Learners' proficiency level needs to be measured with responsibility. It should be kept in mind that whatever the learner learns now will help him or her in near future. We expect government to act more wisely by thinking not only about our present but also future. Number of JSC passed students may be a factor today but the quality of students will always be rewarding. If learners' weakness is looked upon today then not only their standard is degrading but also they will be morally down and look for illegitimate allowance when he or she does not deserve it. A sense of self-esteem needs to be developed in their minds. Learners should be psychologically free and able to explore the beauty of knowledge without being a toady.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Great minds do not think alike. Everyone has his or her own insights about others or different things. It is the opportunity that a person seeks to open up in front of others. Creating something new out of nowhere is very precious and special to someone. It is perhaps the best thought process that a human can have. Nevertheless, a person should get the chance to flourish this tendency. Nowadays, in educational sector, creativity has its own chosen spot. Learners are expected to bring out the best from them and apply it in real life learning situation. This can be only done if they get the chance to develop creativity from early childhood. Being creative is a special ability that a person can possess. However, we cannot expect everyone to exhibit it. A teacher is a person who always tries to influence learners to show the best of them. In this research paper, it has been found that researcher has tried to measure the creativity level of JSC graduates. JSC graduates who are reading in class IX have completed 10 years of schooling and expected to acquire a considerate level of creativity according to the level of their proficiency. Most of the learners who participated in data collection, study in good schools and got at least A- (60%-69%) in English first paper in JSC exams. Still, the result of the test that has been offered by the researcher has shown dissimilarity. Very few learners got A+ (80% - 100%) and some learners even secured less than A- (60%-69%). It can be observed that in Bangladeshi context, scenario is quite different. Many issues came up to find the cause of such variation. The main reason is government's reluctant attitude toward maintaining quality of education. Bangladesh government is not considering the education system as significant as it should be. High standard of education is not only for today but also for our everyday lives. To promote creativity in learning situation we need to consider the whole system and rejuvenate it

according to the demand of learners. It is the students who will lead the nation one day, so it is our responsibility to fit them in right and proper places.



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APPENDIX B

